



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
6TH AIR REFUELING WING (AMC)
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA**

04 Aug 99

MEMORANDUM FOR AMC/LGCO

Attn: David Vivian

FROM: 6 CONS/LGCM

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MacDill AFB FL 33621-5000

SUBJECT: After Action Report

1. This report details the actions performed in support of Operation Joint Guardian (SKOPJE MACEDONIA). Deployment Period: 6 Jun – 27 Jun 1999
2. Contingency Contracting Officers: Capt Fred Lacey – USAFE Contracting Sq. Ramstein AB Germany; SSgt Ric J. Sochor- 6th Contracting Sq. MacDill AFB FL
3. Situation: Contingency contracting support was requested in support of K4 relief operations. Notification to deploying CCO from MacDill came on 05 June, with departure on 06 June, and arrival to the deployed location on 09 June. The USAFE CCO arrived on site 07 June with the initial advanced Tanker Airlift Control Element (TALCE) unit from Ramstein. The deployed commander directed that operations and lodging remain on site at the Petrovec national airport. Preliminary CCO support would consist of providing and coordinating for materials, equipment, and services, including, but not limited to bottled water, meals, portable latrines, showers, mobile phones, rental vehicles, lumber/hardware, office supplies, cleaning supplies, etc. for 24 hour airlift operations.
4. Units supported: 621/721 AMOG (McGuire AFB NJ), 623 AMOG (Ramstein AB Germany), 437 LGM and SFS (Charleston AFB SC). The primary mission of the TALCE task force consisted of providing all loading/unloading, marshalling, and aerial port servicing for incoming DOD aircraft involved in K4 relief operations. Total TALCE camp manning numbered between 60-70 personnel. Other units supported by order from USAFE HQ included AF tenant units (primarily medical units e.g., MASF, FAST).

5. Site Survey: No report on local business and market conditions was received prior to deployment. U.S. embassy and host nation support: N/A. Landing fees and facility rentals were coordinated through other governmental liaison agencies. All other requirements were the responsibility of on-site CCOs, with limited support through the Joint Contracting Office (JCO), located at Camp Able Sentry (distance ½ mile from TALCE village). Camp Able Sentry, established since 1992, serves as a primary staging point for the bulk of K4 forces entering Kosovo. It is approximately 15-20 miles from the SE Kosovo border location.

6. Sources of Supply: Local merchants are largely unaffected by the situation in Kosovo and surrounding regions. Many sectors in the wholesale and retail industries still reflect socialist market styles. Most retail establishments maintain extremely low stock levels and offer limited selection. The availability of many common items (e.g. tarps, laundry bags, disposable dinnerware) is scarce. Large department or home Improvement stores do not exist. For example, to obtain a 75 ft long extension cord, expect to have one custom made. Categories/lists of sources were established primarily through collection of business cards obtained by scouting with the help of an interpreter. The use of a jobber was contemplated after realizing certain requested items were not available from known sources. However, jobbing is not an established market entity in Skopje, and initial dealings with one jobber were less than successful. In sustained operations, greater attempts would be made to locate wholesale type distributors.

Supply Shortages:

a. Rental vehicles. Rental agencies maintained limited fleets, which was further complicated by high demand from international military, humanitarian, and media organizations. Rental vehicles were obtained both from commercial and private sources.

b. Mobile phone service. Macedonia's mobile communication industry consists of a single governmentally controlled network called Mobimak. Normal waiting periods for activation normally range from 2-3 months. The NATO forces established a priority procedure through contract with the JCO at Camp Able Sentry, which significantly reduced the waiting period. TALCE phones were activated within three calendar days. The network suffered technical problems due to high use.

c. Motel/Hotel rooms. Extremely limited due to demand. Most hotels with any vacancies were of lower quality (1 – 2 star). The TALCE unit set-up under field conditions in tents alongside the runway, primarily due to space restrictions, force protection, and proximity to operations.

Frequently utilized businesses:

Beumarket-Hardware (similar to a small ACE hardware)

Hubomart-“

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Vera mart-Grocery store (similar to publix with additional electronics department)

Strovsky Center-Communist style outdoor mall with many small shops including appliance and office supply outlets.

(NOTE: Most businesses did not have the ability to process credit card transactions. Most transactions were made in cash utilizing SF 44s. In a longer term sustained operation, the use of purchase orders (SF1449s) would be acceptable to most businesses. However, the majority of businesses prefer point of sale or cash on delivery.)

7. Problems encountered:

a. Class A phone communications were not available in the TALCE village or operations center. All local calls were made using cellphones. The comm. situation created also created difficulties for laptop internet access both for C.O. and finance use. Internet access was provided on a space available basis from the MASF located at Camp Able Sentry, and later through use of the interpreter's personal computer. For a prolonged engagement, Class A lines would need to be installed, or contracting operations would have to relocate to establish suitable office conditions. The interpreters home was the only location that provided essential operational needs (phone/fax/PC).

b. Initial sourcing: Macedonia maintains a nationally operated telecommunications industry, which does not publish useful yellow page listings. Furthermore, Skopje's one published city map is complicated and of no great use for locating business locations. Physical surveys of the local area with the help of an interpreter proved most helpful in locating sources. The need for an interpreter was apparent early on, and extensive knowledge of the local area and businesses was a heavily weighted factor in the hiring process.

c. Unleaded Fuel was not available for TALCE rental vehicles. CCOs paid for fuel from personal funds. In a prolonged deployment, regular fuel deliveries would likely be arranged via contract.

8. Customs: N/A. Members deployed via military airlift with no customs processing upon arrival in country.

9. Language difficulties: Minor to moderate. Over half of all vendors contacted employed individuals that could speak adequate English. The interpreter frequently joined in downtown buying trips to ensure requirements and transactions were handled smoothly.

10. Currency exchange: The Dinar's value is tied directly to the German Mark, and remained relatively steady ranging between 58-59 dinars to \$1. Most exchanges offered a slightly lower rate than banks, but were usually more convenient. Most vendors would accept payment in U.S. dollars at a lower exchange rate e.g., 55 dinars to \$1.

11. Security concerns: Threatcon levels remained at Charlie for the duration of the deployment. Daily intelligence briefings from assigned OSI and Intel personnel provided specific subversive activity notification and recommendations. TALCE camp security initially ranked poor due to the close proximity to both the runway and access roads. No weapons or security forces were available for approximately two weeks. The only 2 weapons initially on site were from Finance and contracting. The Macedonian military manned one main entry gate continuously, however security was minimal. A 10 man Security Force Raven team arrived on/about 22 June with a variety of small arms, vehicles, and perimeter monitoring devices. The perceived threat level while performing daily contracting duties downtown was low to moderate. Predominate concerns focused on reducing ourselves as a criminal rather than a military target.

12. Political /diplomatic impediments: Coordination with U.S. or local governments was neither needed or required. Political rallies were organized by Serbian sympathizers protesting NATO's role in the Balkans. Serbians comprised between 5-10% of the Macedonian population. U.S. personnel were instructed to stay clear of any demonstrations.

13. Special personnel requirements (rank, gender, skill level, etc) contingency kit requirements, individual clothing equipment requirements:

a. Rank/status is only partially significant when working with Army liaisons. Otherwise , good training and experience are the only prerequisites for effective support. Skill level is less important than actual ability to operate, however APDP level I or skill level 5 or below is not recommended for initial deployment. The presence of two CCO's in the first days on scene proved vital in providing immediate essential needs. One CCO would handle many on site issues, while the other would source supplies and equipment downtown.

b. Most useful items in kit (situational for this particular mission) should contain a minimum 10 books of SF 44's, satellite (Uridium) phone, transformer, laptop w/printer and applicable contingency software (CONS 234 disc, etc). Many other items can be purchased immediately on the local economy.

c. Individual clothing should consist of a variety of hot/cold weather apparel (casual business standard for downtown excursions).

14. Many problems associated with the short notice deployment to a semi-developed location were overcome by a combination of local contractor support, training, experience, and teamwork. The most useful contracting tools for this short-term deployment included utilization of the government VISA (though limited), and SF 44's.

<<SIGNED>>

RIC J. SOCHOR, SSgt, USAF
Contingency Contracting Officer